

REMARKS

Claim 10 has been amended in a non-limiting manner to cancel the phrase “the steps of.”

Claim 14 has been amended in a non-limiting manner by adding “comprising.”

Claims 1, 2 and 4-26 are currently pending in the application.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 2, 4-14, 16 and 18-24 under 35 U.S.C § 102 as anticipated by WO 2004/007395 (“Espiard”); claims 15 and 17 under 35 U.S.C § 103 as obvious over Espiard in view of U.S. 5,968,645 (“Caccini”); and claim 25 under 35 U.S.C § 103 as obvious over Espiard in view of U.S. 5,908,902 (“Pfeil”). In view of the following comments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections.

Submitted herewith to perfect priority is a certified translation of the priority application, filed November 5, 2003.

Espiard published in French in 2004.

Under these circumstances, Espiard does not constitute prior art.

Given that all of the rejections are based at least in part on Espiard, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections have been rendered moot and should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Further, with respect to the secondary references Caccini and Pfeil, the deficiencies of these references have been discussed previously during prosecution.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C §§ 102 and 103.

Application No. 10/578,571
Reply to Office Action dated March 18, 2011

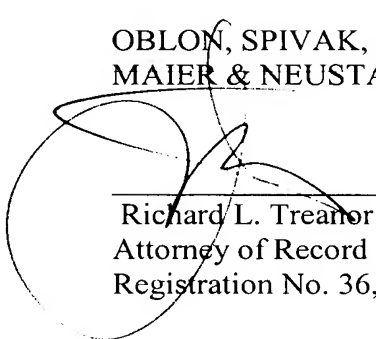
Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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